

ASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today expressed concern about the Administration's plan to allow commercial Mexican trucks free reign on U.S. roads, saying that public safety concerns had not yet been properly addressed.

Last month, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced plans for a pilot program that would allow up to 100 Mexican trucking companies full access to America's highways. Currently Mexican trucks are granted only limited access, confined to special "border zones" ranging from three to 20 miles wide.

Mitchell expressed his concerns at a House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit hearing on the issue today.

"While loosening the restrictions on Mexican trucks may have an economic impact, for me, this is an issue of putting public safety first," said Mitchell. "We need to ensure that Mexican trucks meet U.S. safety standards, and do not put our driving public at risk."

Mitchell's concerns about Mexico-based commercial trucks are echoed by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Inspector General.

In 2005, the Inspector General reported that Mexico has experienced difficulty developing an adequate commercial driver drug and alcohol testing system. The Inspector General also found inaccurate or incomplete data on commercial vehicles and drivers continued to be submitted by Mexico-based motor carriers.

According to the Department of Transportation, an estimated 300,000 Mexican-domiciled commercial trucks cross Arizona's six ports of entry annually.